

**SUMMARY OF THE  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING  
MAY 30, 2000**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference, on at 1 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on Tuesday, May 30, 2000. The meeting was led by its chair, Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. *The main purpose of this meeting was to discuss and finalize acquiring new committee members, the designation of the American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) as a Proficiency Testing Oversight Board/Proficiency Test Provider Accreditor (PTOB/PTPA, and other comments received recently by the committee.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Ms. Burmeister reviewed the minutes from the teleconference on May 16, 2000. The committee agreed that the minutes are final. The status of the Action Items is as follows:

- C Mr. Matt Caruso responded to comments from Mr. Wilson Hershey and has not received any feedback.
- C Mr. Chuck Wibby continues to work on the errata sheet about determination of lower acceptance limits when negative numbers are derived from the linear regression. He is also continuing work on draft language for Section B.1.2 dealing with the minimum number of analytes to be present in a PT sample.
- C Mr. Caruso has responded to comments from Mr. Steve Getz.
- C Mr. Wibby is in process of drafting a letter to NIST about oversight of the PT program and responding to comments from Ms. Jane Jensen.

**NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Ms. Burmeister expressed concerns from the NELAC chair about potential members of the committee who are unable to attend the majority of the meetings. She will contact someone from Colorado as a potential new member. Another person expressed interest in switching from the Membership and Outreach Committee to the PT Committee. The committee did not feel it would be fair to the M & O Committee since they have had great difficulty finding interested members. Ms. Burmeister asked whether there would be support to reappoint Mr. Caruso for an additional year if a new member cannot be found. To do this, the PT Committee would need to request a waiver of the rules from the NELAC Board of Directors (BoD).

## **TOPICS OF DISCUSSION**

### **Changes to Chapter 2 And Appendices**

The only problem encountered was the contractor replacing the current Section 2.3.1 with wording that was simply to be added and this problem is being fixed. Any additional changes for vote can be presented during the committee session at the Sixth NELAC Annual Meeting and will then be listed in the final “Changes to the Changes” document.

### **PT-FAQs**

The Proficiency Testing-Frequently Asked Questions (PT-FAQ) file and PT Process flowchart have been e-mailed to Ms. Lisa Doucet for inclusion in the participant packet and also sent to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for posting on the NELAC website..

### **Draft Letter to NELAC BoD**

The committee reviewed the draft letter to the NELAC BoD requesting A2LA to be designated as a PTOB/PTPA. Ms. Anne Rhyne, the PT Committee liaison to the BoD recommended that the letter not be sent at this time. Because only NELAP can negotiate with and approve a PTPA/PTOB. Ms. Rhyne stated that the PT Committee should seek information from A2LA and not negotiate their becoming a PTPA/PTOB. A comment was made that it may be premature to propose A2LA as a PTPA and that it is important to look for a commitment from either NELAP or the BoD to make a decision once A2LA or some other group meets the requirements. The committee already proposed new language in Section 2.2.2, “The NELAC BoD which has the overall responsibility and authority for the supervisory, administrative and procedural duties associated with NELAC as defined in Chapter 1 may approve or disapprove the designation of an organization as a PTPA/PTOB.” The committee would like to know if the BoD supports this language. Mr. David Friedman expressed concern that all accountability is being placed on the EPA, which does not set the standards. Ms. Rhyne will bring up this issue at the next BoD.meeting. Ms. Rhyne will then draft an e-mail asking if NELAP/BoD will approve any organization to serve as a PTPA/PTOB. This e-mail will be reviewed by the PT Committee first and then, when acceptable, be sent to Ms. Hankins.

### **Draft Letter to NIST/NVLAP**

Mr. Wibby is in process of drafting a letter to be sent to the National Institute of Standards and Technology/National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NIST/NVLAP) regarding status of plans for oversight of providers.

### **NELAP Accrediting Authority (AA) Group Issues**

Because of higher priority items, Ms Burmeister has not been able to respond to the AA Group regarding Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) PT samples and “Quick Response” PTs. At this time, laboratories are only required to analyze RCRA PTs that are found on the RCRA PT Field

of Testing (FOT) list. “Quick Response” PTs are only acceptable if the samples meet all NELAC requirements.

### **Comments/Questions Received From Steve Arms, Florida**

Mr. Arms asked about laboratories that have passed the necessary PTs, but will not be accredited until next year. The question is whether these laboratories need to continue analyzing PTs as they are issued, or whether, in fact, they have met the criteria for accreditation with the samples already successfully analyzed. In New Jersey, non-NELAC laboratories do not have to analyze PTs and therefore, have an advantage over NELAC laboratories, especially if the NELAC laboratories must continue to analyze samples after having successfully analyzed the required number of samples to be accredited. Some members of the PT Committee believed that the laboratories should continue to analyze PT samples to prove their ongoing acceptance. Other members thought this was an unfair burden. It was pointed out by a committee member that this was only a problem for the first laboratory group to be accredited. It was apparent that clarification was needed, including a revision of Section 2.7.2 of the standard. Mr. Caruso will draft new language for Section 2.7.2.

### **Membership and Outreach Committee Update**

Ms. Cindy Nettrour has not been contacted by the Membership and Outreach Committee for committee liaison issues as of yet. She will send an email to Ms. Irene Ronning, Chair of the Membership and Outreach Committee, today.

### **EPA/NIST Items**

Ms. Reenie Paris noted that NIST/NVLAP is working out lines of responsibility for its program. No PT Provider meeting has been scheduled. A problem to be addressed is the variation between state requirements.

Ed Glick from EPA - Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water (OGWDW), informed the committee that radon in water will be regulated and will need a PT sample. Mr. Wibby noted that Radium-226 in water is already available and will serve this purpose.

**ACTION ITEMS**  
**PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MAY 30, 2000**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Ms. Burmeister will send an e-mail to Yvonne Herman regarding PT Committee membership and pursue a waiver with the NELAC BoD if necessary.	6/2/00
2.	Ms. Anne Rhyne will bring up the PTOB/PTPA designation issue at the next NELAC BoD meeting.	6/8/00
3.	Mr. Wibby will draft a letter to NIST/NVLAP regarding oversight of the PT program.	6/9/00
4.	Mr. Caruso will draft language for Section 2.7.2	6/9/00
5.	Ms. Nettrour will email Irene Ronning for committee liaison issues.	6/1/00

**PARTICIPANTS**  
**PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MAY 30, 2000**

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